REMARKS

Claims 1-19, as amended, are pending herein, with non-elected claims 2, 11 and 19 being withdrawn from further consideration.

Replacement drawing sheets are submitted herewith. In the replacement sheets, Fig. 1 is now labelled as PRIOR ART and the claimed three grooves and detents are shown in Fig. 4.

The replacement drawings overcome the rejections of claims 1-11, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first and second paragraphs. The cam circuit/cam follower combinations are the grooves and detents which are equally spaced about the cylindrical portions as shown in Fig. 4. No new matter has been added to the drawings since the additional grooves and detents are described in the original specification and claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the detents and members are "equally spaced" around the first and second cylindrical portions. Claims 3, 16, and 17 have been amended to properly define the axes and the circumference of the cylindrical portions.

It is applicant's understanding that as a result of these amendments to the drawing and claims that all rejections under Section 112 have been overcome.

Claims 1, 3-10, and 12-18 were rejected under Section 102(b) as anticipated by the Rothschild European reference EP 0165190 ("Rothschild"). Reconsideration of this ground of rejections is courteously solicited.

Rothschild explicitly discloses two sets of cooperating detents/members (or cams and pawls as described in Rothschild).

In this respect, Rothschild is, in its first engagement system, concerned with an arrangement where just one cam and pawl set is provided on the telescopic elements 4 and 5. The relative position of the telescopic elements is governed by the cam and pawl set, so that at one position the inner telescopic element 4 is fully received within the outer telescopic element 5 (Figure 1a), whereas in another position they are relatively apart and rotated such that a stepped abutment section on the outer telescopic element engages with

an end surface on the inner telescopic element to hold the telescopic elements in position. Significantly, the cam and pawl set of the Rothschild system is provided to direct the relative movement of the inner and outer telescopic elements, but does not provide a load bearing function. The cam/pawl system does not hold the telescopic elements in position as in the present invention. As such it is quite different from the present invention.

The second engagement system disclosed in Rothschild appears to provide an arrangement closer to that of the present invention, but none the less one which is still very different. In this regard, Rothschild discloses that the second engagement system provides engagement of the cooperating pawl on the mating surface of one of the recesses in the cam. The specification however then indicates that such a system is suitable for materials stronger than wood and/or for supporting lightweight equipment (see lines 21 to 24 of page 5). Crucially, it is stated that "within the limits of the cylindrical surface available on the male telescopic element 4, a second cam may be provided to give stronger support" (see lines 33-36 of page 5). This statement is understandable looking at Figures 4a, 4b and 4c, which show complicated multi-position cam paths, where indeed providing two such paths is likely to be rather difficult given the circumferential limitation of the male telescopic element.

Importantly though, this shows that Rothschild is not addressing the same issues as the present invention and is in fact leading the person skilled in the art away from the present invention. In this connection, the present invention is for raising a very heavy item, such as a snooker or billiard table, which includes a slab of slate stone in its construction. The weight involved is considerable and of a different order from that of a conventional bed, to which Rothschild is directed. As such, the legs of the present invention are load bearing to a degree not contemplated by Rothschild.

The applicant thus was faced with the problem of developing a mechanism which would enable such a heavy load to be raised and lowered between two heights, without the potential for catastrophic failure. Moreover, and particularly in the raised position, the

stability of the table is paramount, given that any movement of the table surface would ruin the game being played theron.

To this end, while Rothschild shows a similar cam/pawl arrangement, it is very clear from Rothschild that two cam/pawl sets, at most, are considered possible for one such leg. There is no disclosure or suggestion of a third cam/pawl set, the inference from Rothschild being on the contrary that this simply would not be possible or considered.

The difference between two and three cam/pawl sets arranged to be equally spaced is however crucial in the context of the present invention. In this connection, it is important to stress again that the cam/paws are bearing considerable weight, and that absolute stability of support is essential for enjoyment of the game of snooker or billiards.

In a situation where a single cam/pawl set is provided, the load transfer is at one edge of the leg where the cam and pawl inter-engage as shown in Figure A below. The telescopic legs will, as such, pivot about that point of engagement so that any spacing between the inner and outer legs will provide room for undesirable movement between legs. This destabilizes the leg and hence the table. Moreover such movement imposes undesirable off-axis forces on the cam/pawl set, increasing the risk of failure and making it more likely that the mechanism will jam. These are clearly undesirable effects.

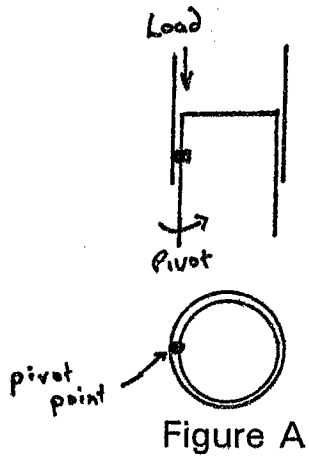

Figure A

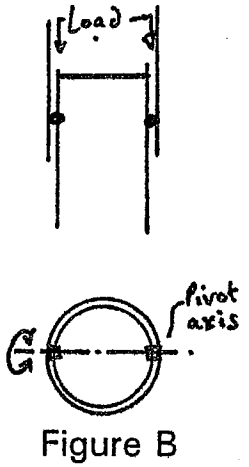

Figure B

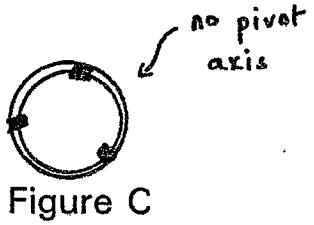

Figure C

Providing a second cam/pawl set decreases the risk of failure of the leg since double the support is afforded. However, on closer consideration, it is apparent that providing a second cam/pawl set in fact sets up an axis of rotation for the outer telescopic leg on the inner telescopic leg, as shown in Figure B above. Hence again, the inner and outer legs will be able to rock relative to one another if there is any space between the inner and outer telescopic legs. This potential rocking movement is not acceptable in the context of the game of snooker or billiards. It moreover does not prevent the probability of the mechanism jamming.

Providing three equally spaced cam/pawl sets as in the present invention and shown above in Figure C, alleviates the rocking problem associated with the one or two cam/pawl arrangements, in that no pivot or rocking axis can be established. It is noted that the problem of rocking/pivoting is not addressed in Rothschild, let alone the solution of the present invention. As such, the claimed mechanism is substantially more stable and robust, and less likely to jam. Such a mechanism is not disclosed or remotely suggested in Rothschild which in fact teaches away by indicating that at most two such cam/pawl sets will be possible, and only then if dimensions permit.

To this end, Applicant courteously contends that the claimed invention as defined in the clarified claim 1 is both novel and inventive.

Allowance of claims 1-19 is courteously solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Lawrence E. Laubscher, Jr.
Registration No. 28,233
Laubscher & Laubscher, P.C.
1160 Spa Road
Suite 2B
Annapolis, MD 21403
Telephone: 410 280 6608

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